A Slip of the Pen.

It was all Dicky Carshalton's fault.

In many respects an amiable youth, he can not be said to be possessed of the finer feelings, and perhaps is not aware of the extent of the discomfort he produced in more sensitive people. A frequenter of parties of every description, he is fond of varying the monotony of the social routine by various little practices. Of these, his favorite, not, alas! peculiar to himself, is commonly known as spoiling spurs. Whenever Dicky sees a pair of people who appear to take particular delight in one another's society, showing a tendency to seek unto themselves retreats, he is never satisfied until by some bold stroke of cunning strategem, he has succeeded in separating them; or at least in destroying their enjoyment for the rest of the evening.

The happy possessor of an exhaustless supply of self-confidence and the most brazen impudence—the objects of his attacks, moreover, being, from the nature of their position comparitively defenceless, it is needless to add that, though Dicky had his failures on record, they are greatly outstripped in numbers by his successes. So there is nothing wonderful in the fact that Dicky was at the bottom of that unfortunate affair with Jack and Ethel.

Matters had long been in a delicate and critical state between the two young people. Jack had told himself over and over again that Ethel was a flirt, and that he, for one, had no intention of adding himself to the list of her victims; while Ethel had relieved her feelings by repeatedly assuring herself that Jack was a cross fellow, who cared for nothing but his books, and was quite impervious to the charms of womanhood.

But that night at the Warringtons things really did seem to be taking a turn for the better. Ethel had boldly turned her back on half a dozen other admirers, and Jack, looking down into her earnest eyes, was rapidly forgetting the doubts and the fears which had tormented him during the past months.

There is no knowing what might not have happened had it not been for Dicky, who came up to them at this hopeful stage of affairs, his shoulders in his ears, his hair brushed to a nicety, and with the most unmistakeable look of mischief in his prominent eyes.

"Good evening, Miss Mariner," he said, taking Ethel's hand in his and squeezing it with impressment; and then the two poor things, suddenly awakened from their dream, stood there chill and helpless while Dicky fired off his accustomed volley of chaff, and Ethel, with feminine presence of mind, ventured on one or two little pop-guns on her own account.

"Miss Mariner," he said at last, with a satisfied glance at Jack's sullen face, "have you been into the conservatory? They've put a lot of pink lamps and there's the most scrumptuous tete-a-tete chair you can imagine."

Poor Ethel looked up at Jack, who stood by, furious and sulky.

"He is only too glad to get rid of me; he has not the ordinary kindness to rescue me from this bore. And I have been so thoroughly amiable to him," she thought in despair.

"If she likes that poppinjay, let her go with him! I'm sorry for her taste, that's all," reflected Jack, and in another minute Ethel found herself actually seated in the tete-a-tete chair with Dicky, whose large eyes were rolling triumphantly in the light of the rose-colored lamps.

She did not succeeed in making her escape till it was time to go home. Jack was nowhere to be seen, and she drove back in the chill gray morning with the heaviest heart she had known for many days.

"Ethel," said her mother at breakfast, the next morning, "did you have a plecsant time at the Warringtons!"

"O, yes, mamma," said Ethel drearily. She was pale and heavy-eyed; I think she had not slept all night.

"And who were there?" went on Mrs. Mariner, helping herself to buttered egg with cheery briskness.

Ethel enumerated various people. "And Dicky Carshalton,' she continued, "and Jack Davenant."

The last name slipped out with exaggerated carelessness, and yet it was whirling about in the poor girl's head, and had been doing so for the last five or six hours, like an imprisoned blue bottle in a glass.

"Jack— Jack— Jack Davenant." Was she never to have another definite thought again?

"By-the-by," said Mrs. Mariner, as she rose from the table, "will you send a note to Florence Byrne? I I want her to lunch here to-morrow at half past one; the Singletons are coming."

Ethel moved to the writing table, blushing faintly. She remembered that Mrs. Byrne was Jack Davenant's cousin.

"Half past one, recollect," cried her mother, as she rustled from the room.

Ethel listlessly took up her pen and pulled a sheet of paper toward her. It was not stamped with the address, but she failed to notice this, and began at once:—

"My dear Mrs. Byrne."

Then she stopped short, and the buzzing in her brain went on worse than ever.

The note got written at last, all but the signature, and then she began to wonder dreamily if she should sign herself "Yours very sincerely," or "Yours affectionately."

"Ethel, Ethel!" cried her mother, putting her head in at the door, "I am going out. Give me the note for Florence; I can take it to the post."

Guilty and ashamed, Ethel seized her pen and wrote hastily, but in a bold hand:—"Yours very sincerely,

JACK DAVENANT."

Mrs. Byrne neither came to lunch nor answered the Mariner's invitation. Mrs. Mariner expressed surprise at this want of courtesy, and apologized to the Singletons for having no one to meet them.

"Are you sure, Ethel, you told her the right day? Florence is in town I know, and its so unlike her to be rude."

"I think it was all right, mamma," Ethel replied vaguely, and never gave another thought to the matter.

But on the morning of the next day, as she was practicing her singing in the great Holland shrouded drawing room, the door was thrown open to admit a benign and comely lady who advanced smilingly toward her.

"Mrs. Byrne!" cried Ethel in some surprise, getting off the music stool.

Mrs. Byrne established herself comfortably in a deep arm chair, then beckoned the girl mysteriously with a well-gloved finger: "Come over here, Ethel."

Ethel drew a stool to the other's side, and sat down smilingly but mystified.

Mrs. Byrne played a little with the clasp of the silver-mounted handbag which she carried, from which, having at last succeeded in opening it, she produced a stamped envelope addressed to herself.

"Do you know that handwriting," she said, flourishing it before Ethel's astonished eyes.

"It is my own; I wrote to ask you to lunch," poor Ethel answered simply, while the thought flashed across her mind that Mrs. Byrne had probably gone mad.

"Read it then," cried the lady with an air of suppressed amusement which lent color to the notion.

Ethel unfolded it quickly, then sat transfixed like one who receives a sudden and fatal injury. For before her horror-stricken eyes glared the words in her own handwriting: "Yours very sincerely, Jack Devenant."

"What does it mean?" she cried at last in a hoarse voice, for it seemed that some fiendish magic had been at work.

"That's what I want to know," replied Mrs. Byrne more gently. "I received this note the day before yesterday. There was no address, and the handwriting was certainly not Jack's. Nor is my cousin the least likely to invite me to lunch at his chambers. So I wrote off to him at once, and told him to drop in to dinner if he had anything to say to me."

Ethel had risen to her feet and was standing with a little frozen smile on her face; but at this point she broke in hurriedly:—

"Did you show him—Mr. Davenant—the letter?"

Mrs. Byrne nodded. She was not a person of delicate perceptions, and had come here bent on a little harmless amusement, but somehow the amusement was not forthcoming.

Ethel clasped her cold hands in a frenzy of despair. She knew that Jack was familiar with her handwriting; had he not made many criticisms, severe and tender, on the occasional notes of invitation which she had addressed to him.

"Jack said he knew nothing about the note, and hadn't the ghost of an idea what it meant."

"Oh, Jack, Jack," cried Ethel's heart in parenthesis, "what must you think of me?"

Mrs. Byrne went on: "Grace Allison came in later and the mystery was cleared up. She swore to your handwriting, and we concluded you had done it in a fit of absence of mind. Poor old Jack, how she did chaff him!"

Ethel was trying to recover her presence of mind.

"How could I have made such a stupid mistake?" she said with a short laugh. "I suppose I was pursuing some train of thought. I had met your cousin at a party the night before—you know how it is."

Mrs. Byrne was sorry for the girl's distress.

"It's a mistake any one might have made, though you must own it was rather funny. However, I can assure you it won't go any further. Jack is not likely to tell, and Grace has sworn on her honor."

Ethel laughed again, meaninglessly. As far as she was concerned, the whole world was welcome to know it now. No deeper disgrace could befall her. "I wonder if he is shrieking with laughter, or merely sick with disgust," the poor girl thought, when her obtuse, amiable visitor had at last departed. "Oh, how I hate him!" which was hard on Jack, considering that his own conduct in the matter had been irreproachable. But Ethel was in no mood for justice. It seemed to her that she had utterly betrayed and disgraced herself; that never again could she venture to show herself in a world where Florence Byrne, Grace Allison, and, above all, Jack Davenant lived, moved and had their being.

Sick with shame, hot and cold with anguish, poor Ethel sat cowering in the great drawing-room like a guilty thing.

Ethel astonished her family that evening at dinner by inquiries as to the state of the female labor market in New Zealand.

Uncle John, a philanthropic person, who happened to be at the party, delighted to find his pretty niece taking an interest in a subject so little frivolous, delivered himself of a short lecture on the subject.

Ethel sighed at hearing that there was so little demand for the work of educated women (save the mark!) in that distant colony, and began to turn her thoughts towards Waterloo bridge.

"Ethel funks on being an old maid. She knows that positively any girl can lasso a husband in New Zealand," her brother Bob remarked in a challenging tone.

But Ethel bore it with uninteresting meekness; perhaps, she told herself, she was a husband hunter after all.

After dinner she put on her hat and stole out into the street. She had been indoors all day and could bear it no longer. The June evening was still as light as day, and simple-minded couples were loitering with frank affection in Regent's Park. She had not gone far before she saw a large familiar figure bearing down in her direction.

"Oh, how I hate him—I hate him!" she thought again, while her heart beat with maddening rapidity. "If he has a spark of kindness in him he will pretend not to see me."

But Jack, for it was he, made no such pretense. On the contrary, he not only raised his hat, but came up to her with outstretched hand. She put her cold fingers mechanically into his, and scanned his face; there was neither mirth nor disgust in it, and the thought flashed across her, chilling, while it relieved her, that he probably attached little importance to an incident which she, knowing her own secret, had deemed but one interpretation possible. And then, before she knew what had happened, Jack was walking along by her side, pouring out a torrent of indignant reproaches as to her desertion of him in favor of Dicky Carshalton at the Warrington's party.

"It is you," cried Ethel, with spirit, for the unexpected turn of affairs restored her courage, "it is you, Mr. Davenant, who were unkind to stand by and let old friends be victimized without striking a blow in their behalf. Pray, what did you expect me to do? Was I to have said, 'No, thank you, Mr. Carshalton, I prefer to stay here with Mr. Davenant.' "

"And if you had said it, would it have been true?"

She changed her tone suddenly.

"Dicky is such a bore, I think I prefer any one's society to his."

He stopped short in the path, seizing both her hands and looked down at her with stern and passionate eyes.

A close-linked couple strolling by remarked that there had been a row, and then refreshed themselves with half a dozen kisses.

"Ethel," said Jack in an odd voice, "it's no use pretending. You do think of me sometimes; I happen to know it."

She was looking up at him; but at this allusion the sweet face flushed and dropped suddenly.

"Ethel" — Jack's voice sounded strangely; was he going to laugh or cry? and why on earth did he speak so low? "Ethel, do you know what signature I should like to see to your letters?"

This was too much.

"No, I don't." She lifted her flushed face; the cruel tears shone and smarted in her eyes.

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

The momentary defiance had died; a very meek defiance came from the pale lips.

"Can't you guess? Then I will tell you, Ethel? 'Ethel Davenant'—that's what I should like to see at the bottom of all your letters. Shall I ever see it?"

"Jack!"

Further explanation is needless. When next they met Mr. Carshalton, both Jack and Ethel were beyond the reach of his manœuvers.

Care of the Eyes.

Sit erect in your chair when reading, and as erect when writing as possible. If you bend downwards you not only gorge the eyes with blood, but the brain as well, and both suffer. The same rule should apply to the use of the microscope. Get one that will enable you to look at things horizontally, not always vertically.

Have a reading lamp for night use. N. B.—In reading the light should be on the book or paper and the eyes in the shade. If you have no reading lamp, turn your back to the light and you may read without danger to the eyes.

Hold the book at your focus; if that begins to get far away, get spectacles.

Avoid reading by the flickering light of the fire.

Avoid straining the eyes by reading in the gloaming.

Reading in bed is injurious as a rule. It must be admitted, however, that in cases of sleeplessness when the mind is inclined to ramble over a thousand thoughts a minute, reading steadies the thoughts and conduces to sleep.

Do not read much in a railway carriage. I myself always do, however, only in a good light, and I invariably carry a good reading lamp to hook on behind me. Thousands of people would travel by night rather than by day if the companies could only see their way to the exclusive use of the electric lamp.

Authors should have black ruled paper instead of blue, and should never strain their eyes by reading too fine types.

The bedroom blinds should be red or gray, and the head of the bed should be toward the window.

Those ladies who not only write, but sew, should not attempt the black seam by night.

When you come to an age that suggests the wearing of spectacles, let no false modesty prevent you from getting a pair. If you have only one eye, an eyeglass will do; otherwise it is folly.

Go to the wisest and best optician you know of, and state your wants and your case plainly, and be assured you will be properly fitted.

Remember that bad spectacles are most injurious to the eyes, and that good and well chosen ones are a decided luxury.

Get a pair for reading with, and if necessary a long distance pair for use out of doors.

Some Curious Facts.

There is a lady in Milwaukee who is the mother nine children. Not one of them was named until it was 12 years old. They were simply called by their nicknames and their numbers, "one, two," etc. When they were twelve years old each one chose his own name and was baptized.

There are 200,000 people in the United States who have artificial legs or hands. This number does not include the veterans of the Union or the Confederate Army. In New York City and vicinity there are about five thousand men and women who have supplied the place of lost limbs with the manufactured article.

Italians are not very strong in domestic ties. Of 43,000 Italians that landed in Castle Garden last year, 34,000 were males. The emigration of females from Italy is smaller than from any other country, averaging but 13 per cent of the whole number which landed. From Germany the percentage is 40; from Ireland, 45.

One of the most surprising features of the modern business world is the extensive use of cottonseed, formerly considered worthless. According to the New York Tribune over 800,000 pounds of these seeds are now pressed for their oil, from thirty-six to forty tons being obtained from each ton. The consumption of cottonseed oil is increasing both in this country and in Europe, and new uses for the oil are constantly being discovered.

An average of five feet of water is estimated to fall annually over the whole earth, and, assuming that condensation takes place at an average height of 3,000 feet, scientists conclude that the force of evaporation to supply such rainfall must equal the lifting of 322,000,000 pounds of water 3,000 feet in every minute, or about 300,000,000,000 horse power constantly exerted. Of this prodigious amount of energy thus created a very small proportion is transferred to the waters that run back through rivers to the sea, and a still smaller fraction is utilized by man; the remainder is dissipated in space.

An amazing system of carrying little children as passengers seems to have been in practice hitherto upon the Russian railways. The Russian Ministry of the Interior has just issued an ordinance to all railway officials prohibiting the further "packing of small children (literally 'sucklings') in baskets, to the number of eight in a basket (!), and forwarding them to the founding houses in the great towns as hand luggage." This abuse, says the Ministry in the circular, is no longer to be tolerated, since it involves a serious injury to the health of the children, and is also an attempt to evade the regulations for the carriage of passengers by rail. In Russia, "infants must be paid for."

Mother (severely)—Robert, you did very wrong to do what I told you not to do. As a punishment for your disobedience, I forbid you to play with Willie again this afternoon. Bobby and Willie twist nervously in their chairs for half an hour, when Willie observes: Ma, do you think it's fair to punish both of us for what Bobby done?

Among other establishments swept away by the recent gale was a shell store at Gigantic City worth $275,000. This estimate of the value of the stock is made upon the basis of the prices charged for clam shells with paint daubed on them last summer. We are informed, however, that the stock was fully insured for nine dollars and a half.

The little boy was on his knees in his little night-dress saying his prayers and his little sister couldn't resist the temptation to tickle the soles of his little feet. He stood it as long as he could and then said: "Please, God, excuse me while I knock the stuffing out of Nellie."

"True, Monsieur le Cure, I am a millionaire; but will you undertake to insure my eternal happiness if I bequeath a large sum to your church?" "I can not settle that point, Monsieur le Marquis; but the experiment is well worth trying."

The greatest art of an able man is to know how to conceal his ability.—*La Rocyefoucauld.*

The Dead.

With white fingers clasped o'er his motionless breast,
And eyes closed forever to earth's changing light,
His struggles all over, his sad heart at rest,
The strong man laid low is a pitiful sight.

His foes stand afar with a feeling of awe,
His friends gather near in the shadow of grief,
And each feels a fear on his heart's fibers gnaw,
From which he in vain seeks a speedy relief.

For somehow the dead as they lie in the shroud,
In eloquent silence speak far more than words,
Rebuking the selfish, the vain and the proud,
The king on his throne and the Lord with his herds.

We take up the casket with tenderest hands,
Our heads bare and bowed in humility's guise—
For this is the homage that Nature demands
Alike from the lowly, the high and the wise.

We dare not to question the future of him
Who closes his task and withdraws from the strife;
The scene open before us looks hazy and dim
And ends at the borders of supernal life.

We know that he comes bringing nothing at all;
We see that he goes, taking nothing away;
We all come and go at the summoning call
Of powers that we know not, but all must obey.

In vain do we seek being's secret to solve;
We catch only echoes from life's future shore;
But long as the earth in its course shall revolve,
The thoughtful will ponder the mystery o'er,

The still and small voices that speak to our minds,
The glimpses of spirits that startle our eyes
Reveal that, though subtler in form than the winds,
The soul still survives when the earth-body dies.

But this is no answer—the secret remains;
The unseen unknown is a mystery still;
Our living and dying no angel explains,
But bows to the force of the Infinite Will.

We're never so near the solution as when
We mourn in the presence of those who are dead;
But silence so dreadful as palsies us then
Has never been broken by words that they said.

So helpless, so silent, so still and so cold—
So weak, yet no longer to tremble with fears,
To them earth is useless, save but to enfold
The perishing dust we embalm with our tears.

Bethink thee, oh! mortal, a brother lies there!
His heart was as warm, and its beat was as free
As yours, now so silently lifting a prayer,
Well knowing ere long you'll be helpless as he.

Does't pay to be selfish, or pay to do wrong,
That pelf may be piled to your credit in bank?
What profit to you the applause of the throng,
When yielding it up without even a thank?

Look into the face of the dead, and declare
Henceforth you will work for the good of mankind;
Look forward to what you will be, and then swear
Injustice shall never find place in your mind.

For do you not think that the pitiful man
Will pleasanter find it when out of the form?
That when to help all he perfected his plan,
He builded to shelter his soul from the storm?

Who knoweth his destiny? Who can foretell
The lot that awaits him when earth-life is done?
He only who doeth his life's labors well
Can calmly contemplate his last setting sun.

Then pause ye, oh man! in your selfish career,
And take not the share that your poor fellow needs;
Give help to the weak, and the heart-broken cheer,
And let all your works show your wealth in your deeds.

Corsets and economy diminish the waste.

Filing saws—Pasting old jokes in a scrap-book.

Very few persons can hold their own on their first sea voyage.

Never kiss your sister before another girl. Make sure of the other girl first.

The pen enables a young man to give his girl an inkling of his sentiments.

Bill Nye remarks that some men's heads are bald on the outside and some on the inside.

She—All extremely bright men are conceited, anyway. He—Oh, I don't know; I'm not.

Mrs. A.—Do you play the organ, Mr. Smith? Smith—Yes, if the handle is not broken.

Plenty of sleep is conducive to beauty. Even a garment looks worn when it loses its nap.

Forty-nine maids became bachelors at Vassar commencement. This seems absurd to a degree.

He—Come now; let's kiss and make up. She—No, sir, I won't. He—Well, let's kiss any how.

"Mamma, if you had three twins what would you call them—troublets?" "Yes, dear, I think I would."

Things are about even; if you are a boy, it is the woodbox, and if you are a girl, it is the dishes.

An exchange says summer is passing rapidly away. Yes; the biggest portion of it washed away.

Miss de Smythe—I wonder why these mosquitoes never come to the hotel? Cholly—They can't afford it.

Temperance orator—What is it, my hearers, that drives men to drink? Voice on the back seat—Salt mackerel.

All the professions are crowded, but there is always room on the top. Unfortunately there are no elevators to help one to get there.

Editor (returning from his vacation)—Anything happened since I've been away? Assistant—Yes, the assessors assessed the office towel as real estate.

Heoffer—What are you engaged in now? Pfeiffer—I'm in Omaha manufacturing Indian relics to sell at church fairs for the benefit of the heathen.

Six-year-old (to caller on her big sister)—Good evening, Mr. Palmer. That isn't my name, little girl, my name's Walker. Oh, you must be Susie's other beau.

How does it happen, sir, that you have your hand in my pocket? Oh, pray excuse me, sir, I am very absent-minded! I used to have a coat exactly like yours.

Father, said a lad, I have often read of people being poor but honest. Why don't they sometimes say rich but honest? Tut, tut, my son, nobody would believe them.

Paterfamilias (to aged daughter)—I am going to take you for a long cruise in my new steam yacht. Matilda (the eldest)—Oh, paw, do be sure to land at the Isle of Man, won't you?

Pa, inquired Bobby, as they were returning from a revivalist meeting, why do those people shout so loud, is God deaf? No, Bobby, but in a case of that kind he is a good way off.

A Chicago society lady issued invitation cards on birch bark. This is a decided novelty, and, if generally adopted, it will soon be possible to distinguish society ladies by their bark.

The honeymoon is that part of married life when the bride spends her time in trying to find out what her husband likes to eat, and he spends his time in trying to eat it after she has cooked it.

Teacher—Johnnie, what part of speech is nose? Johnnie—Tain't enny. Ah, but it must be. Mebbe your'n is because you talk through it, but the on'y part of speech that I've got is my mouth.

Miss Salina—Yes, I admit Mr. Plumpley is rather plain, but it's the sort of face that grows upon you. The major—Indade! Well, I'm sure 'tis not the sort av face Oi want to grow upon me!

Since you have insisted on trying on my hat, Miss Mabel, I shall certainly claim the forfeit. I don't know what you mean; and besides this isn't a good place; they can see us from the hotel.